

Washington, D.C. - Congressman David Price (NC-04) released the following statement today on President Bush's formal request for emergency funding to send National Guard troops to the border:

Today President Bush formally requested \$1.9 billion from Congress to send up to 6,000 National Guardsmen to the border along with the equipment and Border Patrol agents deemed necessary to secure the border in the short term.

Frankly, I am puzzled as to why the President has waited this long to ask for the funding that Congress authorized a year and a half ago. When we passed the 9/11 Commission legislation in December 2004, Congress called for the addition of 2,000 Border Patrol agents annually over five years and 8,000 detention beds annually. Since that time, the President has requested the funding for less than half of the border guards that should have been protecting our borders by now. I wonder where this president was when the Democrats in Congress were trying to pass full funding for the Border Patrol. As a member of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee that funds the Border Patrol, I can attest to the fact that it was the Democrats who were calling for more funding for more border guards time and again.

Now that the President and the Republican Congress have dragged their feet for two years on beefing up our border, they want to send in the National Guard to make up the gap. If the President and Congressional leaders had been doing their job, we wouldn't have to pile another mission on the already overextended National Guard.

Statement by Rep. Price on President Bush's Speech on Immigration

Washington, May 16, 2006 -

I am encouraged that the President is showing some leadership on this complex and divisive issue. I have long supported a comprehensive approach to fixing our broken immigration system, which would bolster security at the border, create a fair and orderly process to determine the legal status of immigrants currently in the country, and allow for the legal employment of foreign workers where labor shortages exist in the economy. I hope the

President will use his influence to convince the more reactionary elements of his party to support a comprehensive immigration reform bill that addresses the issue in its entirety.

I am not convinced, however, that policing illegal immigration along the border is the responsibility of our military. It is true that our border agents are in need of more resources, but the President and the Republican Congress have missed opportunity after opportunity to fully fund border security over the past few years. The 9/11 Commission legislation that Congress passed in December 2004 called for adding 2,000 Border Patrol agents annually over five years and 8,000 detention beds annually. Since that time the Republicans have not provided the funds to make good on these pledges. Rather than deploying our National Guard to take on another responsibility as Hurricane season begins, a much better approach to illegal border crossings would be to provide enough resources for the Border Patrol to do its job.

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